

House Committee on Education
April 17, 2013



Written Testimony on HB 4465
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The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) opposes HB 4465 in its current form.

Obesity, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition are major risk factors for cancer, second only to tobacco use. One third of the 20,000 cancer deaths in the Michigan this year can be attributed to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity. Currently, approximately two in three adults and one in three youth are overweight or obese.

Overweight and obesity are associated with increased risk for several common cancers, including colon, esophageal, kidney, pancreatic, endometrial, and postmenopausal breast cancer. The biological link between overweight/ obesity and cancer is believed to be related to multiple effects on fat and sugar metabolism, immune function, hormone levels and proteins that affect hormone levels, and other factors related to cell proliferation and growth. Maintaining a healthy body weight throughout life is key to reducing cancer risk.

An obese child will likely die up to 14 years earlier than one of healthy weight. Obesity in teenagers can be as deadly as smoking cigarettes (an obese child is twice as likely to die by the age of 55) and the average yearly medical cost of an obese child is up to five times that of a child of healthy weight.

Schools are positioned to play an important role in health. Health doesn't just happen. Students must learn how to be healthy and given the opportunity to practice the healthy behaviors they learned in a supportive and caring environment. Personal responsibility must be taught, learned and practiced. This is where schools can make a difference.

Through strong school-based policies, including quality health education and physical education, schools can help students adopt and maintain healthy eating and physical fitness and reduce childhood obesity.

**ACS CAN Recommendations for
Physical Education in Michigan**

- 150 minutes of physical education each week for children in elementary school
- 225 minutes of physical education per week for middle school and high school
- At least 50 percent of physical education class time should be spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity
- High schools should make physical education a graduation requirement

Substitutions and waivers to "opt" students out of physical and health education, through sports, band or other areas, are not acceptable. The focus is not simply for kids to be active, but to be learning how to be active now and for the rest of their lives. Those learning skills are not part of other curriculums or sports clubs.

ACS CAN supports the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan recommendation for HB 4465 to require one full credit (one school year) EACH of physical and health education (current requirement is ½ credit of each) and to remove the option to substitute other activities to meet these requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.